Memoris Of Time And Place (6)

(Haifa)

At (Nisnas valley)

Rawda Al-Farekh Al-Hudhud



Introduction

“The Right of Return” to Palestine remained and will remain, It is the right of every Palestinian man and woman who left his land forcibly and unjustly when the Zionist Jews occupied Palestine. The three sister’s dream of returning: “Izdi", the "Afti" and "Angi" kept their dreams of returning to Palestine, until they reached their seventies years old. When they traveled to Palestine to visit it, the strange man met them with his magic cups and magic orange juice, they returned to their childhood; visiting the stolen cities of Palestine: "Jaffa, Acre, Haifa, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Lydda”... as they visited before.
Who was this man who would drag them or follow them to these cities?! And what is the role of the black cat in the Wonder Girls journey?!
In Jerusalem, “Afty” left her two sisters to stay with the Al-Murabitat around the Al-Aqsa Mosque.. “Izdi” and “Angie” traveled to Haifa alone with the strange man. Will the sisters meet again?!
These are stories: "From the memory of time and place", and that is the project: "This Is My City".

The writer Rawda Al Farkh Al Hudhud

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At (Nisnas valley)

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In The Name Of Allah The Most Merciful
The Most Compassionate



The strange man reached aunt Raoofa's house (the girls' aunt) early on Friday morning and asked the girls to prepare themselves to fly with him to 'Haifa'..Since he has an important appointment at "Nisnas valley[1]"

As soon as "Inji" heard the word "Nisnas valley" she was extremely frightened. What valley this man is going to take her to? and why has she to go with him? And what is there in this valley?

"Ingi" shrined and hunkered down seeking for protection from her sister "Izdi" asking her to refuse to go with him.

She stuck to the wall, holding the door tightly while her tears poured down heavily. What place is this man going to take them to? Her sister "Ifti" did not return yet and did not appear since she left the house at dawn, how is she going to leave her and travel to "Haifa"? and where is this city "Haifa"? and how far is it from "Jerusalem"?

(1)"Nisnas" means in Arabic : monkey



The word "Nisnas valley" popped into her mind, leaving her full of fear and anxiety. She seized both her sister and aunt "Raoofa" not intending to leave them. She remembered the stories of "One Thousand Nights and a Night" were used to be recited by her father. And thought that this valley is isolated far away in al "Alwaq-Alwaq" mountains where the snake is the same size of an elephant and the roc[2] is as powerful as one thousand horses. Bearing down on the diamond valley capturing a boiled sheep in his mouth, snatching one thousand pieces of diamond. Is this valley (al Nisnas) like the diamond valley in the story of "One Thousand Nights and a Night"? And is the roc bird going to carry her with her sister to throw them in "Alwaq-Alwaq" mountain?

She kept thinking until the man's hand was stretched and captured both girls' hands; heading straight to the door and then to the old stairs and to the train station, where they boarded the train headed towards "Haifa" from "Jerusalem".

After a while the two girls slept with tears filling their throat and eyes.

"Inji" saw a tame animal, looked like al "Nisnas". It even similar more to a monkey, or chimpanzee, or a gorilla, came in order to attack her. She Shrieked awfully and started hitting him with her hands and feet.

(2)"Roc: the fabulous bird of prey"



when she saw her sister's face “Izdi” was wounded and bleeding ; and heard her sister lulling her and patting on her back saying:, “Inji” my love ; wake up dear, we arrived “Haifa”, then she realized that they reached the train station in “Haifa”.

The two girls were astonished to see so many destinations where the train launches to and from: Damascus, Cairo, Gaza, Jerusalem and Hijaz. They know were in an important Palestinian city.

The man came back to grab “Izdi” and “Inji” stepped down with them to the station and headed to his own destiny… suddenly “Izdi” read many signboards were written in Arabic, the first one, “The Courtyard Carriages” while the other one “The Tower of the Clock” (was built in honor to the memory of the Turkish sultan Abdul Hameed the second; and his accession to the throne).

A few minutes later, they all reached the third signboard and she could read “Haleesa district” and “The Mosque of Master Mahmood the Al Ahmadi for “Ahmadi group” and “the district of kababeer”. A couple of minutes later, she saw “the Roman Catholic Church of the Lady” written on it (was built in the year 1862) then another church under the name of “Latin Virgin Mary church” and a third and a fourth church.



while she was looking to her right and to her left, her sister unexpectedly tightens on her hand forcefully and shouts: look “Izdi”!it’s “Al Nisnas Valley,” “Inji” clanged to her sister, while “Izdi” bended towards her embracing her saying: "Don’t be afraid “Inji” it’s only a residential area! It has a strange name but in fact it’s only an area filled with houses and buildings, mosques and churches like other districts in the city of “Haifa”. But “Inji” did not calm down, she started looking at the signboard and to the man’s face in turns for the bit until she felt that this man is the “Nisnas” and that this valley is his own shelter... so where is he going to take them?

She clung to her sister and whispered: “I am not going with you to this “Nisnas Valley!” but the hand of the man and his fist were stronger than her and her sister, so he grabbed them tightly and said, "Come.. we’re going to Friday prayer at “Istiqlal mosque,” the most important mosque in “Haifa” where the great sheikh “Iziddin Al Qassam” gives his Friday sermon (Khutbah).


the courtyard of carriages
Roman Exodus
Thread screw
Al Kabab
al Haleesa
Istiqla

For a while “Izdi” felt she heard the name of “Al Istiqlal Mosque” before. While “Inji” started repeated after the man (in faint voice): Al Istiqlal mosque and Sheikh Izzidin Al Qassam? She approached her sister, saying," Is he the sheikh that our father (God bless his soul) used to talk about? Saying that he is the one who had rise nor started the revolution against the British in Haifa and the whole Palestine?

“Izdi” agreed, "Yes, he is the one. Did you remember how our father used to talk about him and how much we read about his heroism and the bravery of his colleagues who joined the revolution against the British? “Inji” added in enthusiasm," Even against Jews and against their access to the territories of Palestine, and their occupation to our lands and homes.



“Inji” drew near “Izdi” and whispered, “I’m puzzled sister! Is this man against us or does he support us? Sometimes I feel that he is like my uncle... wants to show us every part of our land Palestine. And other times I get afraid from his weird eyes and wonder how he managed to rescue our sister “Ifti” from prison in Jerusalem easily?”

"Don’t be puzzled “Inji” come on, we reach the mosque, don’t think too much!

“I can't I’m really puzzled! Who is this man who insisted to chase us without leaving us for a moment!.. What is he doing with “Sheikh Iziddin al Qassam” here in "Haifa"? Is he a spy, or really he is an actual fighter(3)?

While the two girlswere waiting for the man, he entered the mosque carrying a huge bag that is longer than its width. "Inji" wasn't aware what was inside the bag, but she stood still, staring from her isolated angle. Watching the sheikh of mosque looked around himself cautiously after receiving the bag from the man to make sure nobody sees him. The sheik held the bag tightly brought outa rifle.

(3) Read the biography of the fighter sheikh Iziddin al Qassam and his revolution against the British and against Jews immigration to Palestine until his death on the land of Palestine in the year 1935, from the book of “the woodland of yabad” for the writer Rawda Al Farekh Al Hudhud.



“Inji” was scared, she withdrew from her place and returned to her sister:
“Do you see this man? He’s giving him a rifle, sister he perplexes me!"
"Gave him a rifle?"
Barely she said the word, when a boy (who was watching them without noticing him) attacked her and shouted violently, "What are you doing here, sister?"
“Inji” was terrified and clung to “Izdi” seeking her sister's protection.. The man appeared at that moment and held her hand saying to the boy, "Don’t be afraid, she’s my niece… she and her sister are in a trip to “Haifa” to know the place.
The boy said respectfully, "Welcome Uncle Khalid. Welcome to “Haifa”
“Izdi” gazed at her sister with a look shows her misunderstanding of the man's reality especially after hearing him that they were his nieces.
The man grasped the two girls' hands and said, "Let's move on. I have just finished my mission in this place and met whom I intend to see him here. So let’s move to enjoy watching the prettiest view you have never seen before. Let's go to “Al Karmel Mountain”.



While the girls were walking behind they suddenly noticed a faraway signboard of "the courtyard of carriages". The two girls were extremely delightful and joyous when they rode a carriage driven by two horses, one is white and the other is black their hearts were beating excitedly when the horses trot on Haifa's land…

As the carriage started moving gradually from the Mediterranean Sea level to the peak of "Al Karmel Mountain" which soars up about 550 meters from Haifa beach on the Mediterranean Sea. The view is completely fascinating that amused the hearts.

As the carriage was ascending up and leaving behind the sea and the beach far away. Whereas houses, plains, trees and gardens filled the whole place. Beauty and charm increase with each step rises up.

The driver of carriage said,

"Look there, these walls that surround Haifa coastal city were built by the Palestinian sheikh "Thaher Al Omar" when he ruled north of Palestine. And look there at "Al Balda al Tahta" or as we call it, "The beneath city" which is the trading and industrial center of the city and has" the Port" the most important place which distinguishes "Haifa".



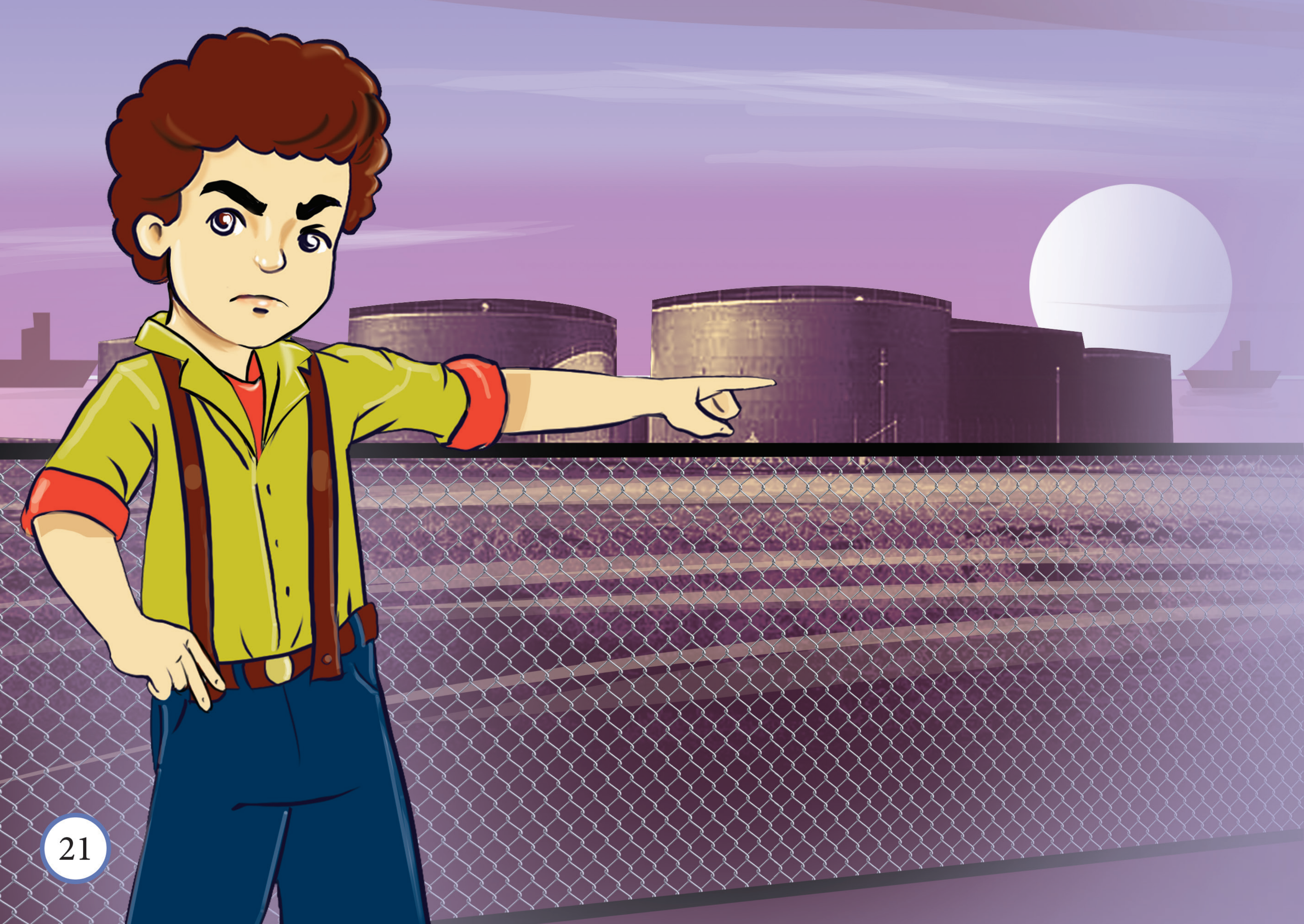
Do you see these big domes over there? It's the “Petrol Refinery” the most important land mark in “Haifa”. Where petrol reaches us from the oil wells in Iraq to be deported to Europe from “Haifa's port.”

Right now we reach “the middle layer” of the city which stretches on this splendid foot of a mountain (piedmont) and includes the old residential districts.

He looked to the other side saying," Look there where those beautiful houses. which known as the German Colony. Houses were built by the German emigrants on according to the European style (design).As you see our city includes all different types of buildings: oriental and western, big and small. With one storey or many storey's. A wonderful city. isn't it?"

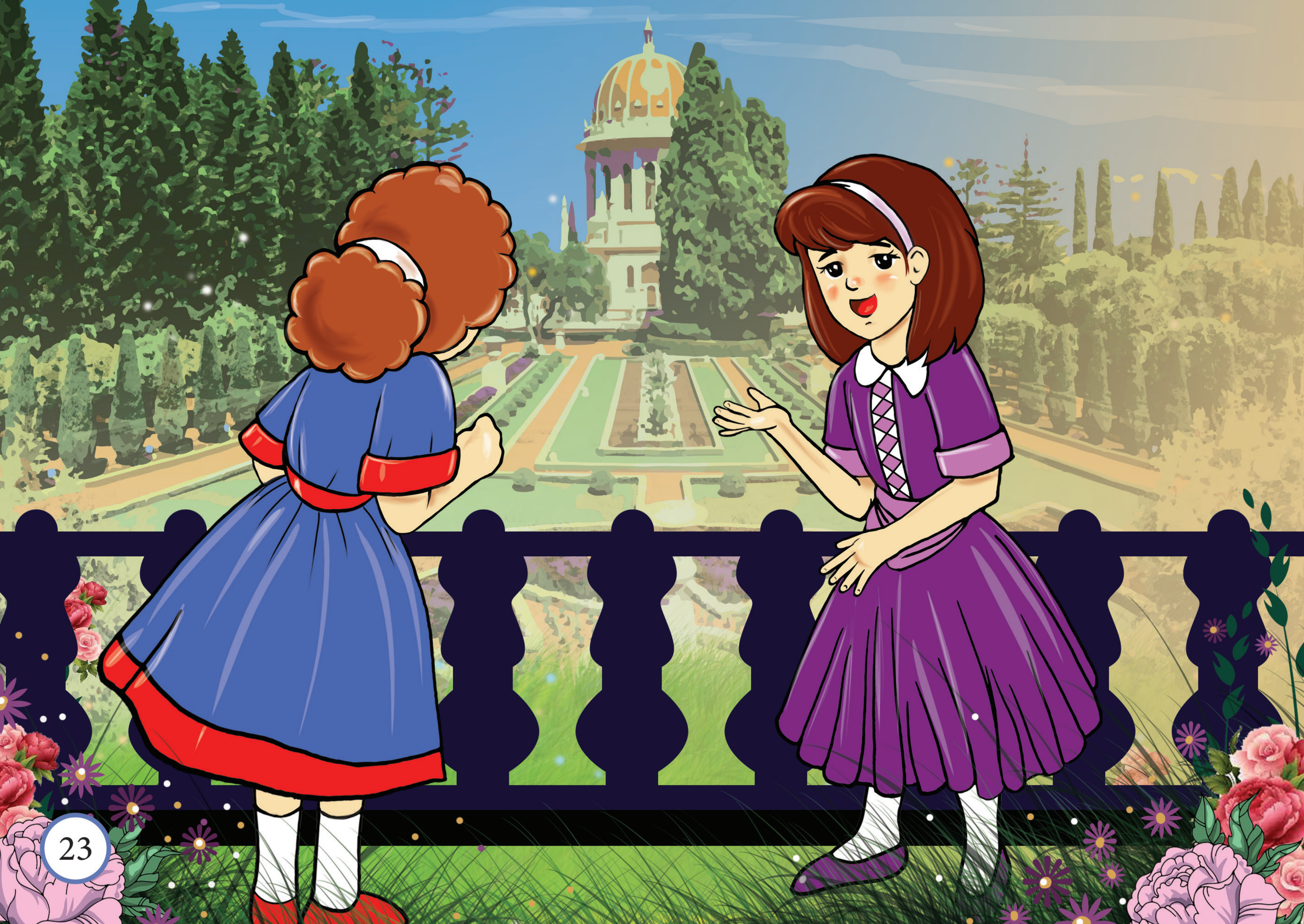
Both girls nodded while holding the iron fists on the edges of the carriage strongly, afraid of falling from the carriage which was rising up and up while the sight is getting more thrilling.

“Inji” whispered to her sister," why would Germans come to live here in “Haifa”?



The driver understood her question without hearing it and replied: About 100 German people came a hundred years ago to live where Prophet Jesus (son of Mary peace is upon him) walked here, you know him don't you?". He added, "He is the son of Palestine, was born and lived on its band, two thousand years ago, he walked on "Haifa's" land on his way to "Nazareth" city. You know this don't you? The two girls nodded and showed that they know it even though without much detail, that from Palestine the Christianity spread to the whole world.

The driver added: "Now, we reach the top of "Al Karmel Mountain". I will leave you to behave as tourists enjoying the attractive sight from "the upper city" which overlooks the whole Haifa. The old and new city. As you know tourists come from all from all over the world to see "the" "Baha'i Gardens" and "German district", "Dagoon Museum", "The Beauty Valley", "Al Nisnas Valley", "Abbas Temple", "Al Kababeer district", "Al Karmel station", "al Haleesa" and "cross valley".. and .. and



The charming view grabs the girls' attention. They were stunned by the beauty of gardens; orchards palm trees and beautiful buildings. They did not show any interest to the driver's description for they were stunned by the beautiful sight of the orchards palm trees and beautiful buildings. Thus, they forgot the entire world around them. The girls got off the carriage while their “uncle Khaled” stayed in it with the driver. They walked amongst pine trees, cinchona and carob trees enjoying the unlimited space.

If they looked below they would see the charming sea and if they looked to the east, they would see beautiful far Palestinian cities.

The two girls returned back to the carriage after hearing the man calling them. The carriage with the two horses descended the same road they ascended. They kept holding the iron fist at the edges of the carriage again to prevent falling down that descending was harder than ascending.

Their uncle surprised them by saying; "I will be away for some days and, you will sleep at my friend’s family “Ahmad's house” in the port district until I come back."

“Inji” smiled when she met ‘Ahmad’ who was the same boy who met them near “Al Istiqlal Mosque” and was about to catch them while sneaking inside the mosque...!



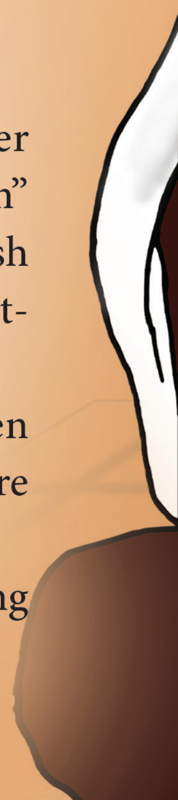
Days have passed while the two girls were spending gorgeous days with Ahmad and his family waiting their uncle to come back.

The movement of the trade ships in Haifa port was the biggest enjoyment for them. Big and small ships enter and get out of the port in all hours of the day and night, merchants move busily like ants on the pavement. As well as, Ahmad's talk about revolution never stops, since he hates the British who rule his country. And he doesn't like to see the Jew emigrants (Zionists) come to his land to occupy it. He even showed them a number of rifles which the fighters use against the British and the Jews, and one day he took them to the military camp for the British soldiers in Haifa, a big camp where you can see the military cars, the British tanks, Airplane tarmac that reached recently from Europe to Palestine.

That day Ahmad said: "I wish I could blow and destroy this camp which controls us and brings to us the Zionists Jews."



Ahmad didn’t leave any important place, he took the girls everywhere: cinemas, wedding salons, schools, hospitals and gardens. Haifa is considered a great city which is full of work and workers, officials, teachers and doctors.
The most splendid hours were when he took them to the coastal plain of Northern and Eastern “Haifa”. Were fields of wheat and palm trees spread everywhere with gardens of fruits and vegetables. Especially that the weather was suitable in summer and winter in Haifa.
But that didn’t last long.
One day Ahmad was silent and still refused to talk when he came home. His mother asked for an explanation, after a while he explained ," Sheikh Iziddin Al Qassam” was martyred today with a number of his companions in a battle against the British near the Palestinian village “Yabad” and they will escort the deceased to his final resting place tomorrow from “Al Istiqlal Mosque” in the “Al Nisnas Valley.”
“Izdi’s” heart was clenched in fear, does that mean another battle will occur between the British soldiers and the people who love this leader “Iziddin Al Qassam” who are going to participate in his funeral.
She was quiet for a second then wondered, “where is “uncle Khaled”, is he coming back to attend the funeral.. or.. or.. or?!”





Days have passed with melancholy and grief, The only sound can be heard was the sound of bombs and bullets and people would talk only about armed Zionist gangs attacking Arabs.

Jews were submissive and weak at the beginning. British soldiers would take them from the port to live in faraway areas from the Arabs and they provided them with weapons and trained them on war against Arabs.[4]

In that far night the broadcast spread a military statement and declared to everybody that the British forces will withdraw from Haifa city and from all the Palestinian cities. The statement and that step were a surprise to everyone for how are the British forces going to withdraw and to whom are they going to leave the military and political management in Palestine?

Everybody was frightened, even Ahmad declared, "It won't be safe since the Zionist gangs want to control the city and has already started fighting the youth who are defending it."

(4) Read about the funeral of the fighter Al sheikh Iziddin Al Qassam in Haifa and the attitude of British soldier from the funeral in the book of "in the woodland of yabad" mentioned before.



The two girls did not understand the political and martial issues (Conditions) or the word “military” or the meaning of “the withdrawal of British soldiers” but really understood that Ahmad was absent from hom.. and that the Zionist Jews have ordered all the residents of the house to leave the house in order to destroy and demolish it.

At that day; big numbers of “Haifa’s” residents started heading towards the port to get on the boats fleeing away from the bullets and bombs that were attacked them!

Everybody fled, so the girls fled too with them, and they were under tension so the girls became anxious too, all of the people were afraid, so the girls got that too. Everyone was threatened by killing by bullets... Even they didn't pay attention when they saw the driver of the carriage ran towards the ship.

What's the matter? And what will happen to Haifa? Where are the man and Ahmed? Where is the ship which they got into, going? This is what they did not know at that time.



To be continued…

